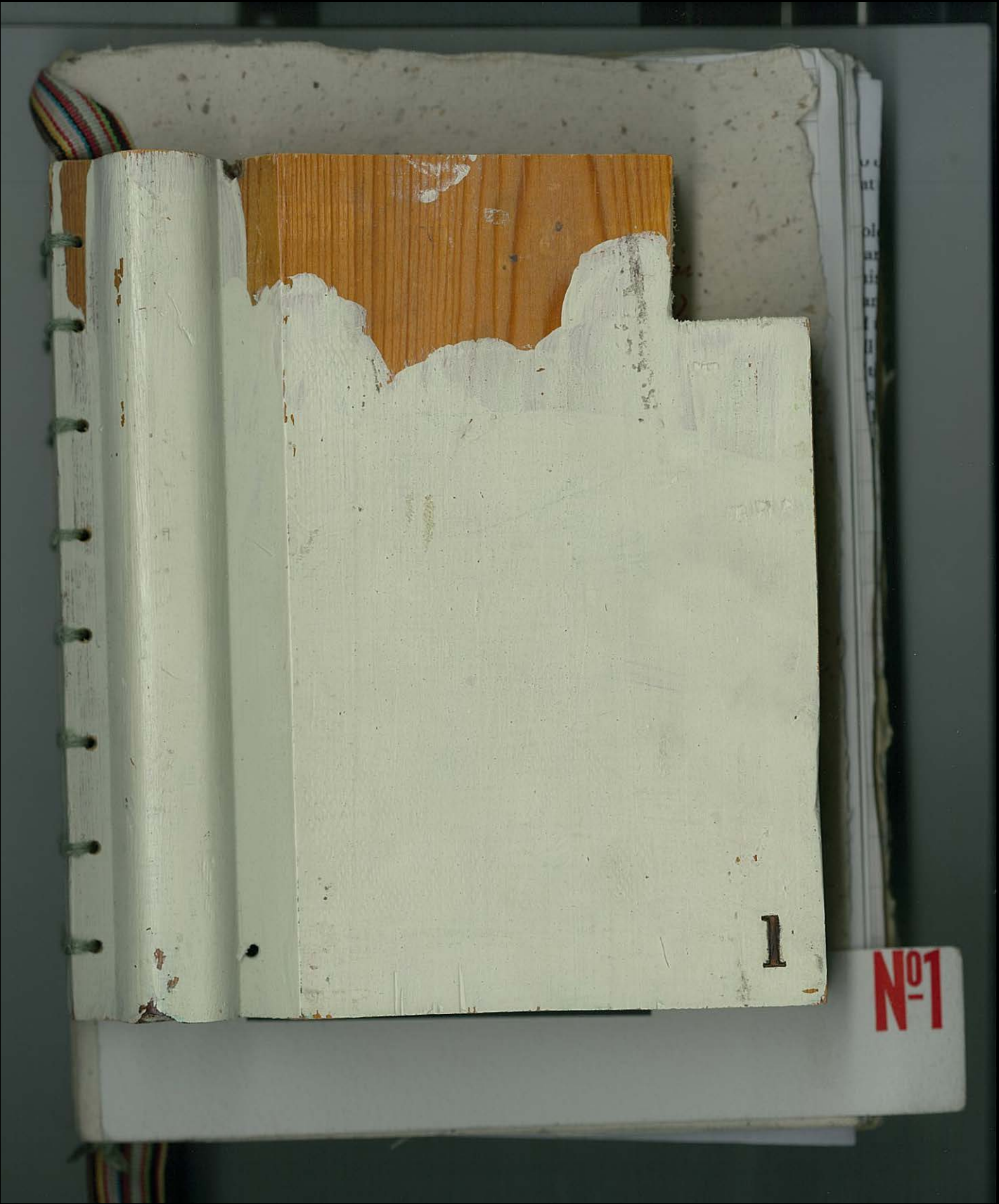


The Cruelty of the Classical Canon:  
Process and Development,  
December 2013-January 2014

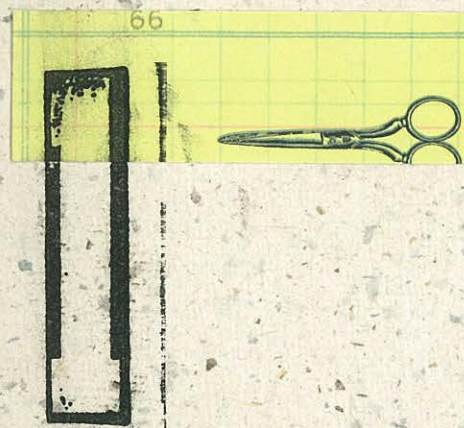
[Hand-crafted Notebook by William Mathie]



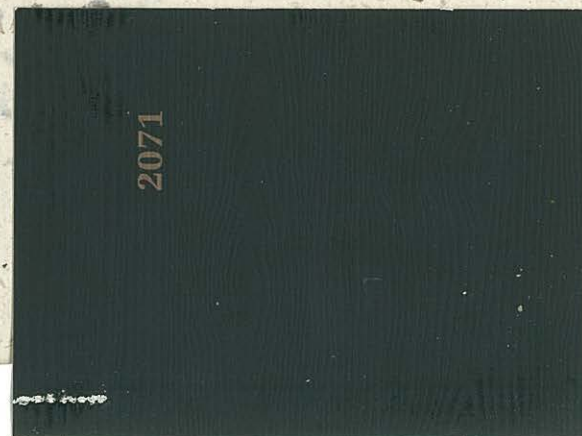




The Cruelty of the classical Canon.  
2013-14. (failure of the 'deep Cut').



{ The first 'Cruelty' is language.  
The deep Cut of meaning. }



Nº1



The first 'cruelty' is language.  
Before we even get to 'the book',  
and well before 'the canon',  
we need to reckon with language's  
almost complete inability to  
provide invincible access to the  
TRUTH. Language is a technology -  
one of many. It's a choice,  
not an inevitable outcome of culture,  
history, intellect. Language fails us.

The second 'cruelty' is 'the book'.  
The object we describe as such,  
takes language (already failed),  
as its primary medium - its material  
base - its foundational insinuation(s).  
Images are historically secondary -  
always bound to the text - and in  
thrall to its dominance. However,  
as others have said, text itself is  
an image - an image of thought, and →

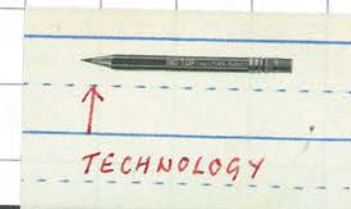
an image of itself. We will come back to this point. \*

The Book. A Book. This Book. Each one contains.

The primary nature of 'book' is to contain. In  
containing, it binds, closes, structures. The Book  
gives form to thoughts shaped by language. It  
begins and ends - it 'enframes', and in this  
process of 'enframing', the Book participates in  
the delimitation of thoughts deemed worthy of  
such containment. To print is to fix. To fix is  
to stop the flow of thoughts in time and space.

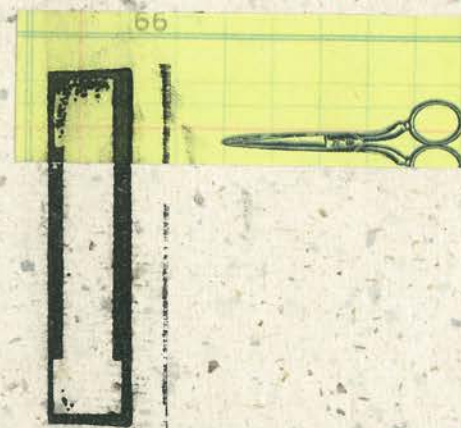
To fix within the form of a Book, is to give  
status and credence to those 'failures' we call  
Language, and to make them manifest in <sup>all</sup> their  
necry. The Book is cruel for another reason -  
it provides language with a stage - a performative  
space in which to enact the 'deep lit' of meaning.  
...

\* Lyotard: Discourse/Figure.





The Cruelty of the classical Canon.  
2013-14. (failure of the 'deep Cut').



{ The first 'Cruelty' is language. }  
{ The deep Cut of meaning. }



Nº1



Big 'B' Book

There are books  
determining  
pass, they are  
from the  
the cadence  
garden  
I like the  
historical  
lack the  
Nashville  
what  
There are  
which  
context.  
status.  
They are  
Grace,  
of history  
acknowledged  
failed  
is equal  
No part

(A disaster)

*(Full text of the  
end of this book)*

\* Blanche and Witterstein share a common project...  
of claiming the dialectical production of truth and  
awareness is discourse/lawrence. They are separated by  
by much.

*This extends to the book.*

The Country of the Book is its future to  
provide that access to the dialectical  
production of knowledge (the big goal)

But Country is productive. As Country is  
expanding. So can we - through the  
context

*This name seems better.*

and you ~~the~~ reply with the same stories. And every  
time you repeat them, they become more like proof  
than memory - like the sound of the train, still  
rattling the tunnels and tracks after it has gone.  
Or like the animal pawprint, ~~again~~ a mark on  
the soil, ~~only~~ only a trace, as the warmth of life  
pulls away.

It gets a bit sad when I realize these things  
and then I am faced with realities about impermanence -  
especially death and old age. My grand aunt is dying,  
my grandpa is becoming senile (or has dementia or  
something) and there have been many deaths here in  
the last three months or so. It makes me wonder if  
this sort of distancing from experience and reality  
is good or bad, sort of like a kind of acceptance  
or possibly a running away. But I don't ~~even~~ think  
it is something I can help at the moment, and  
eventually it will become a question of perspective,  
like all things.

Please write back if you have time :-  
I will write to you, if that is ok. In  
my next letter I will send you the photo  
I took of you at Birmingham :-

My address is :  
12 Badijo Street  
La Vista, Quezon City  
Metro Manila 1108  
Philippines

Much love,  
Meggie ..

14.01.2013



Bis

We are raised fortunate and secure, educated, with inevitable elitism in tandem with humanists, and even Christian frameworks, planted in a complex society of blatant oppositions...

And the only solution I can find and commit to, is to ~~look~~ look for the things I am sincerely moved by and to pursue them as best as I can.

The Jesuits in my theology class/university administration may say it is individualistic, but maybe it is in the fulfillment of the individual that makes a better society. Not success, but fulfillment.

(A disney)

(which leads me to think about Plato and Kant and Nietzsche ~~and~~ and their ideas on what is a fulfilled human person.)  
I wonder if I understand. Heeheehee

I hope that bit of ranting did not tire you. :-  
(and the many erasures! sorry :-)

The last two weeks <sup>since</sup> my return have been filled with reunions and plans for more reunions. It is heartwarming, but also slightly strange, because in the first week I was still "not there" - still probably hovering in the space of the airplane, the borders and "everywhere" of airports. It was like being very happy and seeing myself be very happy, as if I were a character in a book or a film, or even the set of a stage play, repeating lines in dress rehearsals because essentially, everyone is asking you the same questions,

## WHAT IS CRUELTY?

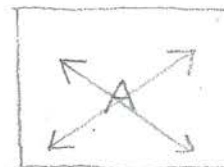
1,500 YEARS.

1. LANGUAGE.
  2. The 'Book' ('book')
  3. The 'CANON' (western)
- } Cruelty.

4. Cruelty to thought (Artaud).  
(thought is the unrepresentable).

"Artaud's 'theatre of cruelty'... reduces the role of and highlighting words as objects of cruelty and dir truly magical sense - for their shape and their sense. This shrinking of logic's importance, points the way abyssal, and productive. In this schizophrenic thought, in presenting the paradox of language and things, time as the intensity of his thought threatens to im which is the fixed point of thought.[5] For Deleuze, without image, which, unable to be immobilized in this is the quality of the 'pure event': a form of thought remains at a visceral, sensual, material level.

4



move away from the centre, to the periphery. words are objects of Cruelty and direction. Cruelty is productive - it creates, not destroys. The Cruelty of the Canon needs to be

Cruelty ① LANGUAGE.

Cruelty ② The Book (codex)

Cruelty ③ The Canon.

Cruelty ④ Thought itself.

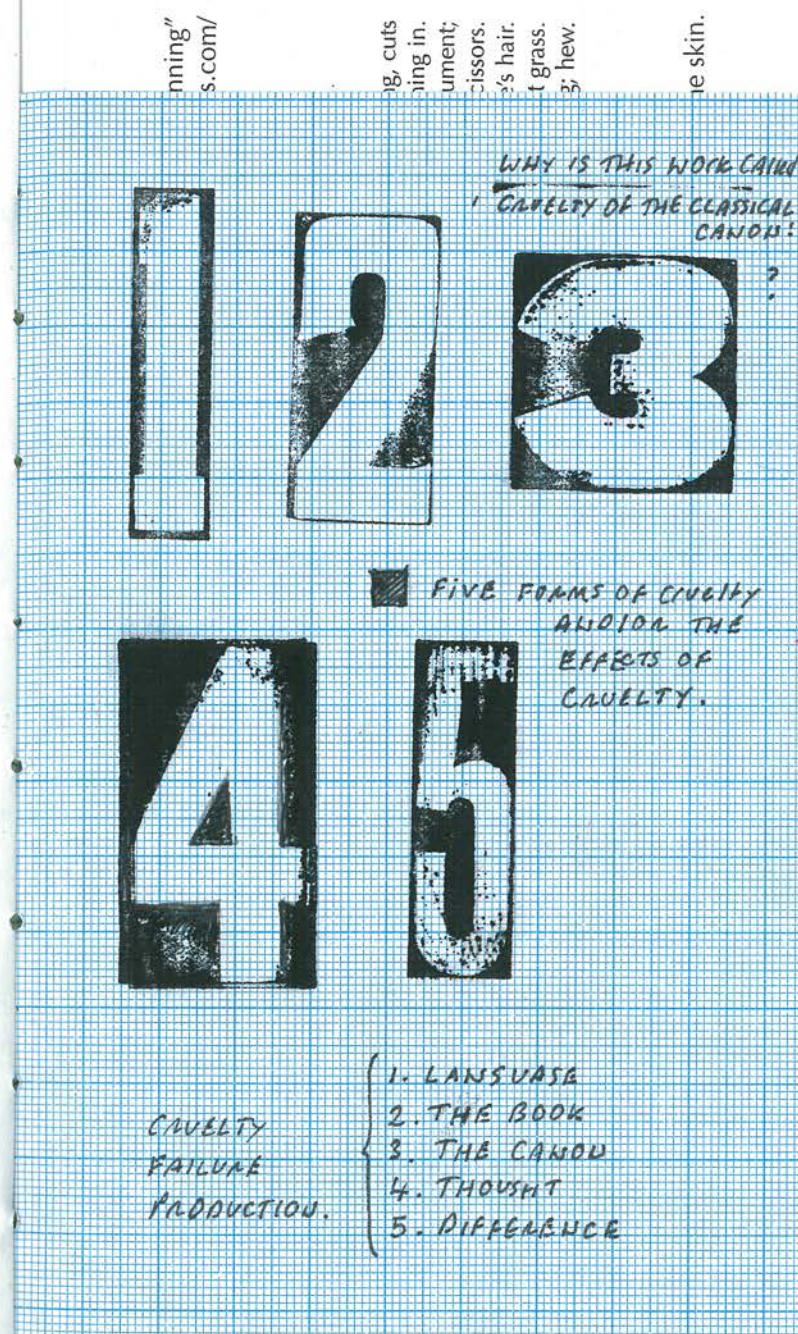
rethorical in this light - as creative.

"We have Art, in order not to die of the Truth". - Nietzsche.



## CRUELTY AS PRODUCTIVE / DESTRUCTIVE.

The 'Cruelty' is both destructive, and productive. Deleuze defines cruelty as the defining characteristic of thought itself. Thought, emerging from the indeterminate mass - being a 'cut' from that infinite space, is by its very nature, cold, classical + violent. It removes itself (cuts away) from the space of everything-at-the-same-time - without-edges, boundaries, and-delineations. Thought is an act of violent decisions, aided by language as a shaped tool. The 'violence' of distinction and form-giving is the name of Reason itself. In rationality, difference, in-itself is made monstrous, since it threatens to destabilize thought's willing forfeiture of difference - to the violence of the determinate. Language is the deep cut. It produces meaning, out of an infinite space of indifferent experience. In doing so, it tells us what is to be 'counted', and what is to be disregarded. As I write, I participate in this process, and I select from the infinite - to the finite. I fix terms upon paper, in time and space - I tell you what I am 'thinking', and I suggest to you, what you might think. This is an act of cruelty and yet, it produces something. The paradox is the truth - the only truth - it vacillates wildly between meaning and nothing.



re[marks]

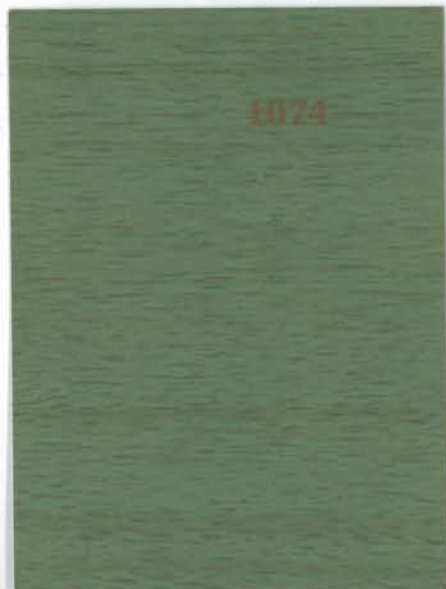




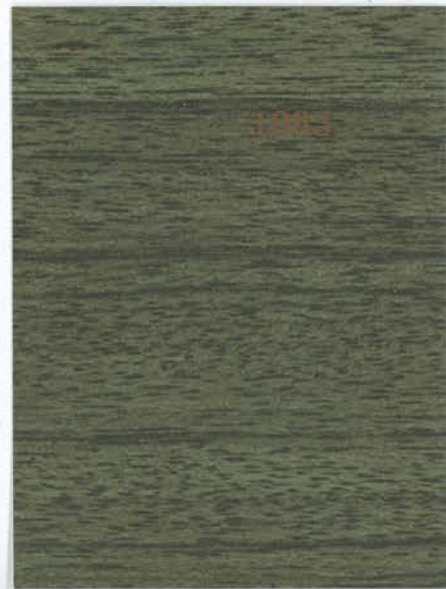
1091



1100



1074



1083

## FAILURES OF LANGUAGE.

### LANGUAGE AS A DESCRIPTIVE SYSTEM.

How is it that these words come to represent  
these phenomena? How does the 'experience' of  
color make the language chosen to designate  
it? How do numbers assign another level of meaning?

1091

CONSTITUTION  
GREY

1100

YANKEE RED

1024

BOTANICAL  
GARDEN

1083

ELIE CANAL.



What is this work really 'about'?

We very rarely question language as a system of meaning production. Philosophers do ("Language is the interface between us, and the 'out there'"), linguists do, and some writers do. However, in the course of ordinary life, we accept language as a phenomena which is a useful + productive tool of thought.

To accept language, uncritically, is to accept the control + power which comes with it. To think through it, without reflecting upon it as a medium,

is to abdicate a certain responsibility; to let others define us through language. I am aware of the paradox (es) I inhabit. Without language, I could not perform a critique of it. Or perhaps I could. Work which moves to the war - Semiotic 'affects' performed by language, seems closer to what I want to achieve. The overabundance of sound, weight, timbre(s), (difference) seem to be of the 'plastic' is a way which language is not.

This means to imply that through experience; sense(s), different weights of thought, detached from words as meaningful) might greed more.

The Cruelty of Love, dialectical thought - 'cut' from the infinite, against the Cruelty of a language which assaults your sense as it flails (and fails) - attempting to construct meaning.

Messy Complex, Irreducible, aesthetically Cruel -

this is the kind of remark this work seeks to PERFORM.

The first cruelty is language. The deep cut of meaning is a cruelty to thought. But cruelty need not be destructive - it can be productive.

"uncertainty isn't indeterminate" (Popper). (of clouds and clocks)

PARADOX IS ART

PARADOX IS DELIRIUM

PARADOX IS PATHOLOGICAL

Materiality is not representational. Which is not to say that it doesn't have a meaning: a presence. Materiality is uncertainty; immaterial/material/presence. Materiality is like music as sound - non-representational, elusive. This is a type of non-sensation that cannot (in turn) be represented. Language cannot describe it. Translation is impossible. Materiality just is.

Benoamine circled around meaning. He never attempts to name it directly but to point to it through fragmentary/disjunctive moments. Meaning appears in the 'flashes', the spaces between, around, and beside - but never as a face-to-face encounter.

The ineffable.  
That which cannot be named.  
The unutterable-spoken.

Cruelty as about a certain form of unpredictability.

It exceeds a limit/pushes beyond a boundary - creates painful encounters with ourselves.

Events cannot be represented. They exist in 'now-time'. They only 'mean' for a moment, and then they are gone.







Sunday, January 13th.

The privilege of writing. In '12 years a slave', there's a thread about writing. He steals paper, makes a quill nib, and tries to use the juice of berries as ink. It doesn't work. Writing a letter would be the only way to escape - but this simple act is denied to a slave.

The Cruelty of the Absence of Language.

Cruelty comes in many forms. I am writing, with a full sense of the privilege that forms. This pen 'works'. This ink 'flows'. I am freed by both. Language is cruel: it separates us from experience, but it also frees us from a darkness of silence. How to resolve the paradox?

Perhaps paradoxes don't need to be resolved. Maybe they just 'Are'...

Language is a paradox. The cruelty of its antinomies; its relationship to both restraint and liberation, is absolute, irreducible. In 'All the King's Men' (S.I.), the dominance + power of language as a system of control, is condemned. And yet, that same language communicates the critique.

How do we get a 'view from nowhere'? How do we get outside language, to speak about it? The 'cruelty' starts with the paradox. It originates there.

## PHOTOGRAPHY.

TRAIN-WAITING IS HARD. THERE WILL BE WOBBLY LINES.



photographs of the book being 'fused'.  
Michael - Blacksmith - fusing Metal.

Then images to be made using a  
Crista 'Brownie', 1955. This is,

essentially, a pinhole camera - taking 120 film  
and shooting at 6x6 cm format. Black and



white images, or  
colour? The  
lens is fixed-  
focus, and so  
it's very basic.

However, the  
images will

have a great deal of detail. Barney  
McCann has offered to print the images,  
which will make all the difference, since  
I trust his 'eye', and his technical ability.



Matte paper - prints at exactly 6x6. Same size? or 10x10. Thinking carefully about the relationship of the images to the 'frame' is important. I want them to provoke an inquiry into process, to be as compelling as the work itself - this is a separate, but related, body of work. An image of the camera itself? perhaps the prints should be the same size as the book itself? This reinforces the relationship between them. The one does not 'exist' without the other. Image of making. Image of Mistake. Image of materials. Information about context? "My cousin, Michael Wilkes, is a blacksmith, and has been so for 30 years. At 17, he apprenticed. His forge is in Thorpe Larch, nr. Middlesbrough. The iron + steel industries were essential to the growth of these Areas, which have now been economically devastated by the loss of industry."

Photographs of the Area. The hills in Eston - the landscape with 'men of iron' Iron was discovered in 1850. It almost parallels the invention of photography. The image 'chart' the process, and the process is ancient. Blacksmithing - refers to the black 'fire scale' - the layer of oxides that form on the surface of the metal as it's heated. 'Smith' derives from 'smite' - to hit. A blacksmith hits black metal. I like the viscosity of this process.

"Concurrent with the advent of alphabetic characters in the Iron Age, humans became aware of the metal, iron." This takes us back to a time before the 'canon' was established. (1200-500 BC) - 3,200 years old. In the Medieval period, blacksmithing was considered part of the set of 'Seven Mechanical Arts' (Artes Mechanicae). While once, blacksmithing was a central 'applied art' - it is now an art. Do-it-yourself / self-sufficiency. The material out of which ideas are forged, is language - in this case, written language, in the form of the codex. The material out of which the book is made is iron - invented / discovered in the Iron Age - recontextualised.

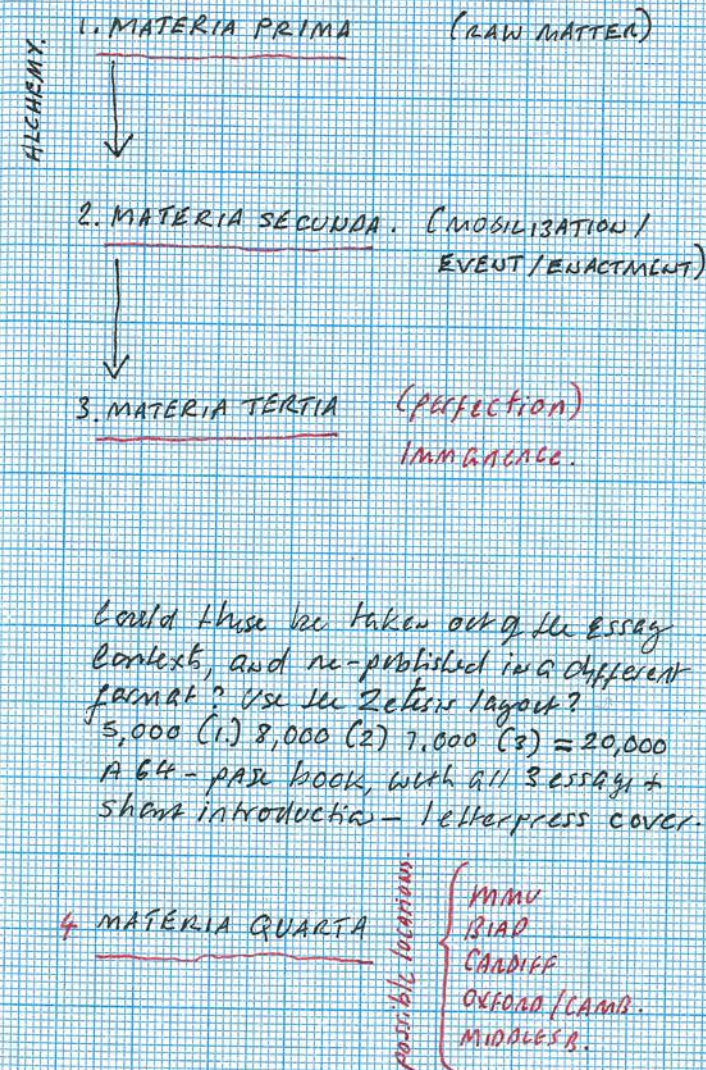
IS IRON - SAME WORD AS... EGG? (ASK JULIAN)

Forging meaning - making meaning - making sense. Language and the book, are constructed, manipulated - produced, from the 'materia prima' - raw material(s). The 'materia secunda' mobilises such matter, and by evoking meaning - by performing it - meaning is made.



Immanence: The 'being within'. no reference to an outside: - pure, unilateral difference - not difference in relation to any 'other'. If immanence is this pure difference - then how is it recognized? Where is it located? If there is no external reference point by which we may compare - to which we might refer it, then how do we understand such 'difference-as-such'? These are very abstract questions. The work I am making here, seeks to ground them in an experience of very basic, physical objects. The 'weight' of the canon - the weight of language. The deep cut of meaning - performed by language. The Alchemical process of transforming Iron + Steel into malleable substances - Forging as a means of transforming. materiality, as-such. The immanence of this material defies categories, eludes description. Matter (Iron/Steel/language) becomes something describable, during this process of transformation, but its intrinsic properties - its 'is-itself-ness' is irreducible to any of the instances it 'becomes'. Iron becomes a book - language becomes thought (embodied). However, 'becoming' is a process that never ends - it's 'always already' - in the 'now'. These moments are just that: moments, soon to be new moments. The Iron gets melted back down - the language becomes raw material. The 'Crucible' destroys itself - we make something - we remake it. we return it to the Crucible from which it was made. Destruction -

Construction. The ETERNAL PARADOX. What would it mean, made it, would iron - casting back work has raw The forced language it over again. - you don't just at



Could these be taken out of the essay context, and re-published in a different format? Use the 2 column layout? 5,000 (1) 8,000 (2) 7,000 (3) = 20,000 A 64 - page book, with all 3 essays + short introduction - letterpress cover.

ht of it - not only have to take it to a more (far more). pages be full. Which? culture, knowledge, texts is to have ment of writing - it doesn't. To leave for the new. To replicate that ment, would be to in relation to it. as, would be to to the Silence - makes / cutting / marking. ht - This is a per- BOOILY. mark each nite the text, line-by-



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The deep cut

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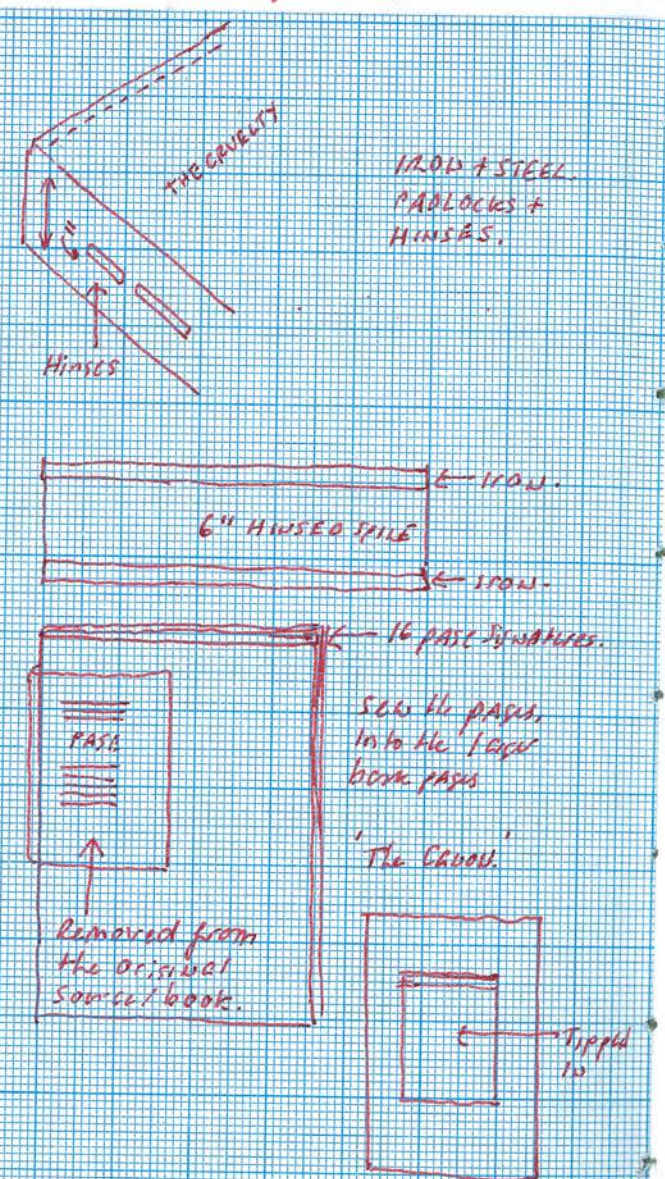
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to the Crucible from which it was made. re-



construction. The ETERNAL PARADOX. What would it mean,  
to make + unmake the book? Having made it, would  
Michael be willing to throw the book's iron - castings - back  
into the forge? Would he be willing to newcast + new  
materials (The Materia Prima), over time? The forced linkages  
of the Codex - rethought - rebound - rebuilt, over + over again.

If one is interested in the 'process' of books - you don't rest at  
the final object.

The cruelty is in the process. The weight of it - not only  
physically, but mentally. I'm tired, but I have to take it to a  
certain point - to bring it to a point of closure (for now).

To have the pages be blank. To have the pages be full. Which?

The Canon is that which defines us - it's culture, knowledge,  
systems and sense. To have a canon of texts is to have  
chosen from amongst the millions of fragments of writings -

to have decided what counts, and what doesn't. To leave  
the pages blank, is to leave open a space for the new. To  
fill it with the existing canon would be to replicate that

which already exists. To fill it with comments, would be to  
'gross' the canon - to work peripherally in relation to it.

None of these seem right. To 'mark' the pages, would be to do  
violence to the integrity of the page. It cuts the silence - makes  
meaning 'take place'. The act of writing / cutting / marking.

is a cruelty and violence in its own right. This is a per-  
formance piece. It needs to be enacted, BOOILY. mark each

page in pencil lines - Manuscript-Style. Strike the text, line-by-  
line. One line of type, and a smid.



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# Forms & Language of Failure:

Bankruptcy	Frustration	Lead balloon
Breakdown	Turkey	Non-success
Collapse	Inadequacy	Sinking ship
Decline	Lemon	Total loss
Defeat	Loser	Fuck up
Deficiency	Mess	Abyss
Deterioration	Misadventure	Negligence
Loss	Miscarriage	Non-fulfillment
Misstep	Nonperformance	Lack of success
Abortion	Modernism <sup>2</sup>	Omission
Bomb	Bungle	Incompletion
Botch	Rupture	Defeat
Language <sup>1</sup>	Stalemate	Dereliction
Bust	Stoppage	Blunder
Checkmate	Implosion	Epic fail
Decay	Washout	Neglect
Deficit	Wreck	Floundering
Downfall	False Step	Rout
Fiasco	Faux pas	Overthrow
Flop	Flash in the pan	Democracy <sup>3</sup>

1. "We have art in order not to die of the truth."  
- Friedrich Nietzsche
2. "Ambition is the last refuge of failure"  
- Oscar Wilde
3. "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel"  
- Samuel Johnson

JANUARY, 2014. CSM LECTURE

The failure of language to account for, reflect, or embody, experience. 'Forms of Failure: Language/Modernism/Democracy' is a 6 minute, 40 second, Pecha-Kucha style presentation/performance, whose aim is to fail. The images projected behind a wall of words, spoken randomly, fail to account for the language used. Conversely, the words cannot speak fully to those images. Failure is inherent, inevitable, inescapable. The 'Cruelty' of failed utopias, failed causes, failed meta-narratives, is complete. This work will now become a book: Another failure.

The productive nature of failure.

I am philosophically and intellectually furious.

FURIOUS.

That fury is barely contained. It stretches the limits of endurance: the body; time; the 'book'.